

ANECDOTES OF NAPOLEON.

EARTHLY state never reached a prouder pinnacle than when Napoleon, in June, 1812, gathered his army at Dresden—that mighty host, unequalled in all time, of 450,000, not men merely, but effective soldiers—soldiers skilled in chivalry and conquests, and there received the homage of subject kings.

NAPOLEON'S WAY OF MAKING AN ALPINE ROAD. Four of the strongest oxen of the country, led by the best guides, trod down the snow, in which they sank, and almost disappeared; they were followed by forty peasants, who cleared and formed the path. A company of sappers assisted them, and perfected the trench; two companies of infantry, marching in very close files, completed the operation of smoothing and consolidating the snow. The van guard was followed at some distance by a company of dragoons of the 10th regiment, then came a detachment of artillery, and a hundred beasts of burden, and the escorts closed the march.—*Memoirs of Dumas*.

* THE KING OF CONVERSATION. Napoleon and Talleyrand wrote to one another in the beginning of this century very affectionate and confidential notes, wherein they chatted together very familiarly. One day Napoleon said to Talleyrand, "You are the king of conversation. What is your secret?" "Sir," replied Talleyrand, "I'll speak frankly, and shall derive my answer from a comparison taken in your profes-

sion. When you are making war, you would willingly select your fields of battle." "Certainly," replied Napoleon, "it would be convenient and useful to say to the enemy's general, 'Just go a little farther into that mountain pass, or spread over that plain.' But the enemy cannot be ordered about in that manner. What are you driving at?" "Well, sir," resumed Talleyrand, "I choose my own ground of conversation. I engage in it but when I have something to say; I make no reply to the rest. In general I do not suffer myself to be questioned, except by you, or if asked any thing, the questions have been suggested by myself. Formerly, when I went out shooting, I always fired at six paces; I killed little game; the others fired at random, I when I could not miss. In conversation I let a thousand distant things pass to which I could make ordinary replies; but what rises between my legs I never miss."

NAPOLÉON'S POWERS. This organization, these immense preparations (for the Russian war), were terminated about the month of February, 1812. I had several times written from the dictation of the emperor; and I had occasion to admire his inconceivable memory, and the precision with which, without having recourse to the lists, he bore in mind the effective force of the several corps, in order to determine the means of raising them to the complete war establishment, according to their wants. One day, having laid before him a general table which he had desired me to give him, and which he ran through very rapidly, he dictated a distribution of conscripts, founded on this statement of the effective force of all the corps of the army, without once hesitating, and stated the actual force of each of the corps and their position. He walked rapidly up and down, or stood still before the window of his cabinet. He dictated with such rapidity, that I had scarcely time to set down the figures clearly, and to indicate by abbreviations the notes which he added. For full half an hour, I had not been able to take my eyes from the paper on which I wrote. I had no doubt but that he had before him the general table which I had given him; and when he paused a moment, and I was able to look at him, he perceived and laughed at my surprise. "You thought," said he, "that I was reading your table. I don't want it; I know it all by heart. Let us go on." —*Memoirs of Dumas.*